

## **International Policy Brief**

Issue 2, October 2008

### **Join the Movement for Global Mental Health!**

We welcome the launch of the Movement for Global Mental Health (GMH), emerging from the *Lancet* series. On Oct 10, we celebrated the launch of the website for the Movement for Global Mental Health. Warm congratulations to Prof. Vikram Patel, Prof. Martin Prince, Shekhar Saxena (WHO), Richard Horton (Lancet editor) and the distinguished group that led the GMH's overall development. At the start of the process Chris was asked to facilitate the advocacy work of the movement. We invite you all to join the Movement at [www.globalmentalhealth.org](http://www.globalmentalhealth.org) and view the ten-point advocacy agenda. October 10 marks World Mental Health Day, an integral part of GMH advocacy.

At BasicNeeds, we are commemorating World Mental Health Day in each of our country programmes with user led events, including demonstrations and street drama. Internationally, we prefaced our celebrations on 9 October by attending the WHO's launch of the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) in Geneva. In Ghana, Jane Cox and Peter Yaro were interviewed for national TV, and in Sri Lanka, Chris and Tilak Karunaratne were interviewed on National Radio about the poor state of mental health resourcing in the world and some suggested solutions. Both country programmes briefed journalists on the importance of the gap between the mental health burden of disease and the resources available.

### **Spreading our word**

BasicNeeds has presented at three landmark conferences since our last brief.

- In June, Chris presented on different theoretical approaches to mental health at the first Africa Regional meeting of the WHO-sponsored Global Forum for Community Mental Health, organised by our Programme Manager in Uganda, Tina Ntulo.
- In August, both Chris and Shoba consulted on the WHO's World Disability Report, a seminal publication on the status of services for people with disability globally to be published in late 2009.
- September saw our lessons shared on either side of the Pacific with a presentation made by Steve Fisher, at the World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health in Melbourne, and a presentation by Victoria de Menil at the World Psychiatric Association in Prague on the role of livelihoods and user groups in improving mental health.

### **Forays into DFID**

News in the health sector at DFID is that Stewart Tyson has resigned as Head of Profession for Health and is temporarily being replaced by John Worley. Despite this transition, our lobbying has moved steadily ahead. In July, we attended a meeting to help shape the agenda of DFID's research into non-communicable diseases, an area which benefits from DFID's expanded investment into health research of £80 million per year.

### **The Model in Print**

We are proud to announce the publication of the Handbook for Mental Health and Development (ISBN 978-0-9558880-0-7), a book outlining with clarity the components of BasicNeeds' integrated intervention model. The book was written by Tess Astbury and Mark

Tebboth, two committed volunteers from the UK while in Bangalore under the direction of Shoba Raja, our Director for Policy and Practice. Jeffrey Sachs, Special Advisor to the UN on the Millennium Development Goals, prefaced the handbook with the following endorsement:

*“BasicNeeds has proved that by working with people with mental disorders and their families in a holistic and participative way, their mental health can be improved and their levels of poverty reduced. . . . I am truly grateful to see the efforts of organisations such as BasicNeeds in helping to translate [the millennium] goals into reality.”*

### **Welcome to our newest partners**

We are proud to announce the formation of two new strategic partnerships. The Pan-African Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (**PANUSP**) signed a memorandum of understanding with BasicNeeds to mutually promote the inclusion of users in African mental health advocacy. In addition, we entered into a new collaboration with the International League Against Epilepsy (**ILAE**), who will join forces with us in Ghana for one of the first African demonstration projects of the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy. People with epilepsy form 40% of our overall participants and 60% of our African participants, so this new initiative is being met with much enthusiasm by our Programme Manager Peter Yaro and his colleagues in Ghana.

For more information, or to remove yourself from this list, please contact Victoria de Menil, International Policy Coordinator: [victoria.demenil@basicneeds.org](mailto:victoria.demenil@basicneeds.org)